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William Marvy Co.

This year marks the 75th anniversary of the William Marvy Co. Read on to discover its secrets to longevity.



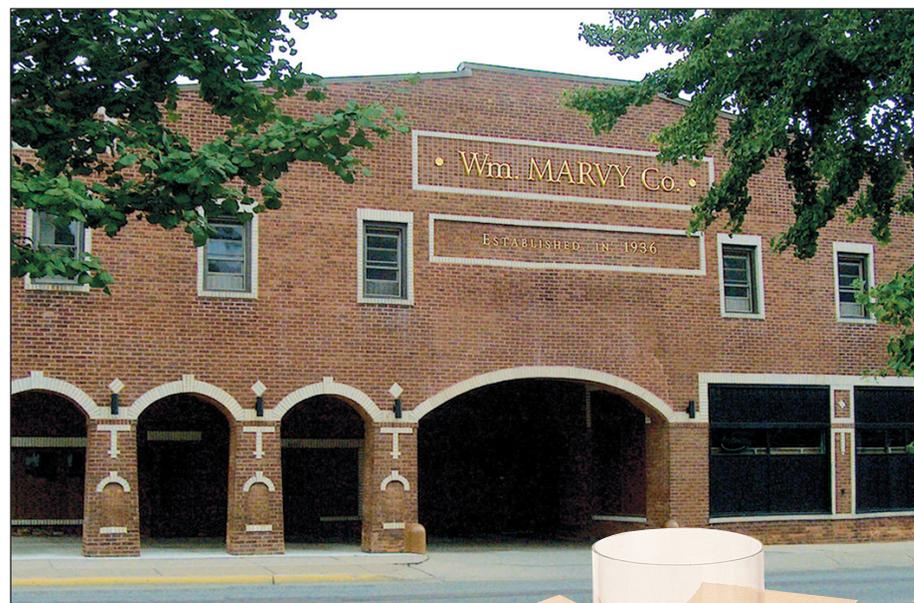
Bob Marvy, president

WHAT STARTED OUT AS A HUMBLE, home-based business in 1936 is now a well-known industry supplier of barber poles, sanitizers, disinfectants, brushes, dusters and sundries. *Beauty Store Business* recently spoke with current president Bob Marvy about his late father's legacy and the company's plans for the future.

BSB: Please give us the history of the William Marvy Co.

MARVY: My father, William Marvy, founded William Marvy Co. in 1936. He'd worked for a couple of barber supply companies in St. Paul, Minnesota, prior to [that]. After the second barber supply company that he worked for closed its doors, he began his business, working out of the basement of his parents' home. By 1940, this home-based operation was no longer feasible, and the company moved into a commercial-loft building in downtown St. Paul. Following a few years of continued growth, he moved the business once again to two storefront locations in downtown St. Paul, where he also opened a retail barber supply. By this time there were three salespeople on the road, an office staff of two and a full-time shipping clerk.

When the company began manufacturing barber poles in 1950, a third storefront was rented on the same block to be used as the first barber-pole factory. Additional employees were hired to manufacture barber poles. The company had tremendous growth during the 1950s, and in 1961, made a move to our current location, which is a large garage-type building with lots of room to accommodate many years of growth.



The company's headquarters since 1961.

Once in the new facility, we began producing our electric Steril-Ray Sanitizers and Mar-V-Cide Disinfectants. During the early 1960s, we were running two shifts five days a week to keep up with production. By the end of the 1960s, as the barber-pole business started to decline, the company began to place greater effort toward sanitizers and disinfectants. We also added a large selection of hairbrushes, neck dusters, shaving brushes and other sundries to our line.

During the 1970s and 1980s, our company serviced almost 3,000 dealers in the United States. Mom-and-pop beauty supplies carried our brushes and sundry items. During the late 1980s, we found ourselves once again completely out of space in our facility. In 1992, we were fortunate to be able to purchase the adjoining building, giving us some much-needed office



Barber poles are still a popular item.

and manufacturing space. Over the last 20 years, our focus has been on

AT A GLANCE

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the continued development and expansion of the sanitation and disinfection product portion of the business.

Happy 75th anniversary! Do you have any special events planned?

Our plans for the company's 75th anniversary are fairly low key. In the fall, we will have an open house for our employees, former employees and some close friends and family. We will also spend an evening with the principals of our rep groups while we are in Las Vegas [for Cosmoprof North America]. And we will be offering customers some special deals.

Please tell us about your background.

My background goes all the way back to when I was a young child and would come to work on Saturday mornings with my father. He would start me working on some menial tasks. (I got started early.) When I was a teenager, I worked in the factory and the shipping department part-time during

the summer and on Saturdays, learning these areas of the business. I also filled in for the office staff when they were on vacations, which allowed me to become familiar with their jobs. My formal education was at the University of Minnesota, but my real education came from working in the business and learning all aspects of what we do here.

Who are the members of your executive team?

I am president of the company. My oldest son, Scott, is the chief financial officer and assists me with day-to-day operations. My middle son, Dan, takes care of customer service and the order department. My youngest son, Brad, is working his way up the ranks and is one of our shipping clerks. My executive assistant is JoAnn Wegner, who has been with me for 28 years. Frank Hess is also part of our management team. He oversees the production staff and handles purchasing. Scott Gohr provides invaluable assistance





as our barber-pole technician, with 28 years of experience.

We have very little turnover. It is really like a big family. While in the past we watched our employees' children grow up, we now are watching their grandchildren.

"IT'S A BIG FAMILY. In the past we watched employees' children grow up. NOW WE'RE WATCHING THEIR GRANDCHILDREN."

What are some of your company's best-selling products?

Our best-selling products are [from] the line of disinfectant products under the brand name Mar-V-Cide. They include two liquid disinfectants: Mar-V-Cide Disinfectant and Mar-V-Cide II Disinfectant Cleaner; and two aerosol products: Mar-V-Cide Spray Disinfectant and Clipper Ease Disinfectant Spray/Lubricant, along with disinfectant jars in a wide variety of styles and sizes.

We are most well-known, however, for our line of commercial barber poles. These are still our pride and joy. We are committed to

our line of U.S.A.-produced, high quality barber poles.

As far as new products are concerned, we have added Mar-V-Cide Liquid Disinfectant and Clipper Ease Spray Disinfectant/Lubricant specially packaged for the Canadian market. This is a very exciting addition to our line, allowing us to service our many customers throughout Canada with fully registered and approved products.

Is there anything else you'd like to add?

We have a wonderful relationship with a tremendous [number] of long-

standing customers. Our products are beautifully featured in some of the finest catalogs in the industry. We feel a great sense of pride in the relationships that we have built with these customers. We have been fortunate to also be associated with a terrific group of international distributors. The same goes for our manufacturer representatives. We have a long history with each of them.

To show our appreciation to all of those who helped make this important milestone possible, we are publicly thanking many of them in our full-page ad in this issue of *Beauty Store Business*. Each one of our customers and representatives has truly helped make our company the success that it is today. We look forward to continuing in the long-standing tradition of our company. We are proud to be a part of this wonderful industry. ■

Shelley Moench-Kelly is managing editor of *Beauty Store Business*.